

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21185) - THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BUILT ENVIRONMENT ON THE OUTDOOR MOBILITY OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL AND HEARING DISABILITIES: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Background and objectives

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasizes creating equitable access to the outdoor environment, underscoring implications for the health and quality of life of people with disabilities. Making neighbourhoods accessible requires attention to the diverse needs and challenges of people with different types of disabilities. The paucity of literature reviews on neighbourhood accessibility for people with sensory disabilities prompted us to conduct a scoping review on the influence of the neighbourhood built environment on the outdoor mobility of people with i) low vision and blindness, and ii) deafness and hearing loss.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Following the six-stage process outlined by Levac et al. (2010) for conducting scoping reviews, peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers from eight databases, published in English from 2000 to 2020, were reviewed using Covidence. Articles were independently screened by graduate research assistants at the title-and-abstract and full-text article stages, respectively. Data from 57 articles was extracted, tabulated, and coded to identify the extent of literature on this topic, and key substantive findings. Preliminary findings were validated through a series of online consultations with two people with sensory disabilities, who are disability advocates and/or working with a local non-profit disability organization.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Preliminary findings suggest neighbourhood environmental aspects/features such as, street crossings (traffic signals, tactile surfaces, auditory cues), sidewalks (temporary/permanent barriers, width), traffic safety (detecting and negotiating vehicles and cyclists), street furniture (seating, transit stops, lighting), landmarks and signage, and land-use (mixed-use, open spaces) are important for the outdoor mobility of people with visual and hearing disabilities.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The findings are being used to adapt an existing user-led neighbourhood environment audit tool to enable people with visual/hearing disabilities to evaluate the outdoor built environment for walkability/wheelability issues. This tool will help municipalities systematically consult stakeholders with lived experience to plan and implement city-wide accessibility initiatives.

Palavras-chave : Outdoor mobility, built-environment, visual disabilities, hearing disabilities